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THE
DECLARATION
OF AN
Honest Churchman,
Upon OCCASION of the
PRESENT TIMES.



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Honorable Chairman

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Occasion of the Present Times.

IN this turbulent Sea of Evil Humours, both in Church and State, I have been examining whether the bottom I stand upon be sure, and the Foundation under me firm. The Trial of the Doctor last Winter has brought every Man upon his Trial; and I must no longer take my self for granted, while the World is discussing me; for tho', when I turn my Eyes inward, I look like the same Man, and feel no sensible Alteration in my self; yet, in the Eyes of others, I perceive, I begin to look dubious.

With the violent Whigs, I am a Tory; and with the violent Tories, a Whig. If I don't extol the Doctor's Sermon, and say, the Spirit of it is peaceable, the Reasoning strong, and the Style even and elegant, I am a Low-Churchman; If I say, the Prosecution was rash and indeliberate, then I am a High-Flyer. If I profess the Christian Doctrine of Passive Obedience, I mean well to the Pretender. And, if I allow that two Parts of the Legislature may, upon Extremity, parry with the third, to prevent the Constitution from being overturn'd, then I am a Republican, a Rebel, a Disciple of *Ben. H*——. If I say, the QUEEN has a Parliamentary Right, I am a State Fanatick: And if I affirm, she has an Hereditary Right, then I am disaffected to the Government. If I solemnly pray for the Princess *Sophia*, well and good: But if I begin her Health, and wish Prosperity to her House, I am star'd hard at, as out of all Principle and Propriety. If I say, the Reverend Champion, set out upon this Progress to serve the Church, and continued it, to scandalize the Church; and that the Edge of the *Tool* began to turn, and to spoil the good Work it had made; I have the Misfortune to please neither Side: Whereas there seems no real Repugnancy in these Points, and an honest Man may maintain them all, without any Violence to his
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Judgment. But, what nettles me most of all is, that they whose Names for the Church are up, *A—p*, *S—pe*, *S—ge*, nay, even Sir *S—H—t*, these may freely censure the Madness of the Prophet, and lift up their Hands and Eyes, at the solemn Protections in his Speech: Whereas, If I but just mutter a Word about his Conduct, and ask which way he is Travelling, 'tis as much as my Character is worth.

Now the true Secret of the matter, I find, is this, That if we set up for right *Party-Men*, it must be *Studio Partium*; by following and defending all the Principles and Dignosticks of the Party, right or wrong; by sticking more devoutly for one Polemical Point of Distinction, than for all the thirty nine Articles, or even for the Apostles Creed; and by talking and running after our Ring-Leaders at all Adventures, *non quo eundum est sed quo itur*. Whereas if a Man will be so self-will'd as to think impartially, and to stick by his own Understanding, he must expect, in Course, to be found sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, and, like the Sun, to appearance, continually turning about, even while fixt and immoveable in the same Centre. As one Party weighs down with Might and Main this way, and the other that, he must stand a Check to the Impetuosities of either; and do

the troublesome and ticklish Work of Trimming the Boat, and keeping things even and upright ; which tho' the difficultest and sincerest Province, rarely raises a Man up above the Character of cautious and wary ; for which he must be content to be buffeted and banded to and fro, to be worried between the upper and the nether Millstone, and to be vex'd with perpetual Disputes and Altercations, neither satisfying nor satisfied either way. And therefore, how easie and advantageous soever this part may seem, because 'tis the peaceable and good natur'd one ; in fact it is quite the contrary. To disrespect Sides and stand to reason, is to remain in a disinterested and friendless State ; which is what I am far from recommending to the Choice of any Man, whose Business is not to make Conscience, but a Market of what he does.

But, in regard I am turn'd of forty, court no Preferment, have a small Patrimony of my own, and have no one to please but my self ; I am determin'd, with God's leave, to abide by the plain impartial Dictates of my own Judgment ; and have, accordingly drawn up this frank *Declaration* of what I am ; to see if either High or Low will receive me on these conditions, if not, I will be a Churchman by my self.

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I believe and profess the Church of *England*, as by Law established, in point of Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship, to be the most primitive, pure, and excellent Church in the whole World. I pity those who dissent from it thro' a mistaken Conscience: and such as keep off thro' Faction, Humour, or Interest, I perfectly detest and abhor.

I believe the Dissenters, of all kinds, from this Church to be in a State of Schism, and sin: And that they will give but a lame Account of themselves at the last day, for the numberless Mischiefs and Distractions, which they have stirred up, and entail'd upon this divided Nation. And I believe the Jacobites to be as arrand Schismatics as any, because they set up *Altar against Altar*; and as dangerous as any, because they are professed Enemies to our happy Establishment. And those Clergymen who treat the former so tempestuously, and these so tenderly, give no good Sign of being perfectly well satisfy'd in their own Consciences.

I believe an Occasional Conformity Bill to be most highly just and reasonable; because, when Men shew they can comply but will not, it is only their Obstinacy; and, when they comply against their Minds,

it is their hateful Hypocrisie alone, that can be affected by it.

In all other respects, I am clearly for continuing that Indulgence to Dissenters which the Law has given them; believing, they may be melted into Conformity by Mildness, and mellowed into the Body of our Church by time, when they will not be driven into it by force: At least, kind Usage must make them ashamed of their Separation, when Persecution would make them proud of it. Nevertheless, I would not have their Impunity be mistaken for their Justification; nor their being tolerated, pass for the same thing, as being establish'd by Law. The mean while, the Presbyterians would better deserve this Favour they receive from the Church of *England*, if we saw them take any Measures with their *Scotish* Brethren, to procure a like Indulgence for Church of *England* Men in *North-Britain*.

I am utterly against enduring Seminaries, or Schools of Schism. The *Tares* that are already grown up among the *Wheat* to some Maturity, should be let alone, till the general Harvest: But there is no good Scripture or Reason for sowing such evil Seed among the *Wheat*, nor are they called by a good Name, in the Parable, who do it.

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I believe the Doctrine of Passive Obedience to be truly Christian, and agreeable to our Constitution, both in Church and State; and that in respect to particular Persons, in an absolute, unconditional Sense: So that no Subject, in his private Capacity, can lift up his Hand against the Lord's Anointed, upon any Pretence whatsoever, but he must be a Traytor, and an Assassine. Nevertheless, inasmuch as our Monarchy is mix'd and limited, and the Supream, or Legislative Power, consists of three essential Parts, I conceive, that when any one of those Parts, so far encroaches and breaks in upon the Constitution, as to violate the Fundamental Laws, and pervert the Course of Justice, and attempt to destroy our Establishment, either in the Civil, Military, or Religious Branch thereof, then the other two may take upon them to counsel, re-monstrate, and, if Necessity require, to restrain and compel that irregular, disorderly Part, to return within due Bounds, and behave it self according to Justice, and the Laws. And for this, our Constitution is now, at length, so happily adjusted, that all the three Parts of our Legislature, are to be continually existent; either to counsel, to assist, or to check one another: So that there can be no Pretence for Popular Resistance.

I believe the QUEEN has both a Parliamentary, and an Hereditary Right; and that Her

Her Hereditary Right is Parliamentary : The Body of our Laws having ever confirm'd the Descent of the Crown to the right Heirs and Successors, and some particular Statutes having determined and limited that Hereditary Descent to the Protestant Line. And for this Reason,

I dare not, hold the Inheritance of the Crown to be indefeasible and unalienable, not only because I know there have been special Defeasances made thereof; upon urgent Extremities; but, because I believe the Supreme Legislative Power may make Alterations and Changes in any Government, for the common Good, at Discretion : And that such Alterations, when made, are valid, and legal, the Supream Authority being accountable for what it does, to none but God ; and to question whether, what the Legislature has enacted, be legal, being to ask, whether it is Day, when the Sun shines.

And he who shall recollect, that the Statute of the 13th of *Q. Elizabeth*, makes it Treason for any Man to say, that the Parliament cannot alter the Succession ; which Act is yet unrepeal'd, will be very tender how he talks of unalienable, and indefeasible Right.

And therefore, my Reason falls in readily with the Judgment of that excellent Prelate, Bishop *Blackhall*. “ That same human Pow-

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er that can settle a Crown in entail, can also cut off the Entail of a Crown : That same human Power that can settle the Succession of a Crown unconditionally, may appoint Conditions, without the performing of which, he that is next Heir in Course, shall not inherit. And whatever Establishment of the Government, the Supream and Sovereign Power of any Nation makes in one Age, the Supream and Sovereign Power for the time being, of the same Nation, may, in the next Age, make null and void." On these Premisses alone,

I take the *Pretender's* Title to be utterly at an end, and I abjure him with Heart and Hand : I renounce him on manifold Accounts; not only as his Birth, howsoever legitimate in it self, was not legitimately prov'd, the Persons most nearly and essentially concern'd to witness it, being sent out of the way ; and, as all the Title he could pretend to have, was cut off and alienated by the Supream Legislative Power, I mean, by all the Branches of it then remaining in the Government ; but, which I stand upon much more, as he is of the Popish Religion, and as such, both by his own Principles, and the Tenour of our Laws, most essentially unqualify'd to bear Rule in these Protestant Dominions. To have the *Head* of our Church of the *Romish* Religion, and the *Body* of the Reformed, is something very mon-

monstrous and repugnant ; and all the Relation, Life, and Motion, between such a Head and Body, must be unnatural, and disjoint'd, and like the Wreathings of a Snake when cut in pieces. And while it is still fresh in my remembrance, how impossible we found it, in his Father's Reign, to fadge with a Popish King ; and that, notwithstanding the fairest Promises and Appearances in the beginning, the Highest Churchmen, after a Year or two, were glad to look out sharp for a Protestant Wind ; I cannot but dread trying Practices again upon such dangerous Principles, and shake at the very Thoughts of ever seeing this Nation under full Sail again for Popery.

I am entirely for Churchmen to manage in the Ministry, that so the Church and State may be of one Piece, and no Jealousie arise between them. By Churchmen, I do not mean such lewd Men as have no Religion in them, nor such low Men, as only join with the Church, out of Form, and can just say they don't go to Conventicles ; while it is a Rule with them to Vote Fanatically, and upon all Divisions, to give it on the Dissenter's side. But I mean such, who from their sound Principles, and suitable Lives, have gain'd the general Esteem, of being cordially and conscientiously zealous for the Establish'd Church. But then, as another necessary Qualifica-

lification, they should be such as are not only reputedly, but sincerely well-affected to the present Establishment, and heartily for pursuing the Ways and Measures we are now in, and for prosecuting this just War, to a lasting and honourable Peace. If an Angel were to get up to any publick Post, without this publick Spirit, he would only stand there to be a Mark of the common Hatred and Reproach.

I owe my Good QUEEN, not only the most unfeigned Duty and Allegiance, but the profoundest Love and Admiration; believing her to be the very best Sovereign that ever sway'd the British Sceptre. And I would have no Ministers endured near her Royal Person, but such as shall exert their utmost Abilities to render her Reign easie and happy, and such as will most faithfully and wisely advise, but not violently force her, in the Measures of her Administration. And, as I think it unreasonable, that the Choice of them should be imposed upon her, by any Authority, Foreign or Domestick; so I would have her left free to determine by such Advices, as appeared to her most rational and wholesome; and not have Councils come insolently upon her in the Nature of Commands; that so she may not be treated like an Engine of State, but an intelligent and wise Being, and as an Head which can
speak

speake sensibly, and not such a one as must be spoke thorough.

I am heartily for humbling and reducing the *French* Power, and shall never be at rest in my publick Spirit, till I see *Spain* restored to the House of *Austria*; and I hope all true *Britains* will be of the same Opinion with me, that the Privilege of possing all the Powers and Interests on the Globe, so peculiar to this Great Island, is too pretious ever to be fool'd away: And that we will take care to keep our selves so considerable and weighty, as that, on which side soever we shall think fit to step in, we may turn the Scale. And the only way to maintain this Privilege, is to preserve the Balance even.

I am stedfastly and inviolably for adhering to the Protestant Succession, in the most Serene House of *Hannover*; not only because I have sworn to it, and do daily pray for it, and that 'tis High Treason to be of another Mind; but because I believe, from my Soul, that the Stability of our Government, and the Tranquillity and Happiness of this Kingdom does, under God, depend absolutely thereon. The *Bill of Exclusion* was one of the wisest Bills that has been brought into Parliament, since the Reformation; and, next to that, the Bills of Limitation: The former being rejected, gave us the Curiosity

ty to experience, that a Popish Sovereign would not do; and the two latter, by passing into Laws, have secured us, I hope, from ever trying over the same Experiment again.

Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing, ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

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